REMARKS

In a telephonic interview held 03/20/2007 between Examiner Maureen Wallenhurst and Applicants' Representative Jack P. Friedman, agreement was reached on proposed claim amendments and explanations that would place the claims in condition for allowance. The claim amendments herein are in accordance with the proposed claim amendments discussed in the aforementioned telephonic interview held 03/20/2007.

The amendment of the specification corrects typographical errors and does not add new matter.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-39 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Applicants respectfully traverse the § 112 rejections with the following arguments.

35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

The Examiner rejected claims 1-39 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The Examiner argues: "Claim 1 is indefinite since the preamble of the claim recites a method for testing the stability of semiconductor packaging material in a sustained oxygen environment. However, none of the steps of the method recite how this stability is evaluated. The only positively recited steps of the method comprise providing the samples of semiconductor packaging material to be evaluated, exposing the test samples to an oxygen gas under certain temperature, pressure and humidity levels and exposing the control samples to an inert gas under certain temperature, pressure and humidity levels. There is no conclusive step that recites how the exposing steps serve to evaluate the stability of the semiconductor packaging samples."

In response, Applicants have amended the preamble to claim 1 such that the elements of the claimed method of claim 1 are fully compatible with the preamble of claim 1.

The Examiner argues: "Claim 1 is also indefinite since it is not clear what the temperatures "ΔT_1" and "ΔT_2" stand for since these temperatures have not been adequately defined. The delta Δ symbol usually means a change or a difference value of a parameter, and it is not clear what change or difference in temperature these symbols represent. It is not clear how these temperature values are obtained or established in the method. The only thing positively recited in claim 1 is that "ΔT_1," is between 0 and the value for "ΔT_2". See this same problem in

claims 20 and 28."

In response, Applicants note that the Examiner is referring to the issue of the clarity of the relationship: $T_G-\Delta T_2 \leq T(t) \leq T_G-\Delta T_1$. Applicants note that the preceding relationship defines a range for the temperature T(t), the lower end of the range being $T_G-\Delta T_2$, and the upper end of the range being $T_G-\Delta T_1$.

The range's lower end $T_G-\Delta T_2$ is not indefinite because both T_G and ΔT_2 are not indefinite. T_G is not indefinite because, T_G is the glass transition temperature of the molding compound which is a numerical value characteristic of the molding compound. ΔT_2 is not indefinite, because ΔT_2 must satisfy "$T_G-\Delta T_2$ is at least about 20", which is equivalent to: ΔT_2 does not exceed T_G-C wherein C is a constant of about 20. For example if $T_G = 200$ then ΔT_2 cannot exceed about 180.

The range's upper end $T_G-\Delta T_1$ is not indefinite, because both T_G and ΔT_1 are not indefinite. T_G is not indefinite as explained *supra*. ΔT_1 is not indefinite, because ΔT_1 must satisfy "$0<\Delta T_1 \leq \Delta T_2$", wherein ΔT_2 is not indefinite, as explained *supra*.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that ΔT_1, ΔT_2 ,and T(t) are each not indefinite in claims 1, 20, and 28.

The Examiner argues: "Claim 6 is indefinite and redundant with claim 1 since claim 1 already recites that the N samples are substantially identical to one another. See line 4 of claim 1." The Examiner makes a similar argument for claims 21 and 29.

In response, Applicants note that claim 6 recites "wherein the N samples are essentially identical samples", which is more limited than "N substantially identical samples" recited in

claim 1, since "essentially identical" is a special case of "substantially identical" as indicated in the specification on page 11, line 21 - page 12, line 1 ("In an embodiment, the N samples are essentially identical, which is a special case of the N samples being substantially identical"). For a discussion of "consisting essentially of", see MPEP 2111.03 ("The transitional phrase "consisting essentially of" limits the scope of a claim to the specified materials or steps "and those that do not materially affect the basic and novel characteristic(s)" of the claimed invention").

Similar considerations apply to claims 21 and 29.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 6, 21, and 29 are not indefinite.

The Examiner argues: "Claim 13 is indefinite since it recites that N=1. However, independent claim 1, from which claim 13 depends, recite that N is a positive integer of at least 2. Therefore, N has to be 2 or greater and cannot be a value of 1 as recited in claim 13.... Claim 14 is indefinite and redundant with independent claim 1 since claim 1 already recites that N has to be an integer of at least 2. Therefore, it is understood from claim 1 that N is greater than 1."

In response, Applicants have amended claims 13 and 14 to replace "N=1" by "N=2" in claim 13, and to replace "N>1" by "N>2" in claim 14.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 13 and 14 are not indefinite.

The Examiner argues: "Claim 20 is indefinite since it is not clear how the last determining step serves to evaluate the stability of the semiconductor packaging samples. It is not clear that a certain degree or level of difference in the measured characteristic between the test

samples and the control samples serves to indicate a certain level of stability for the test samples, and what that degree or level of difference has to be in order to determine a certain level of stability. There is no quantitative level of difference in the measured characteristic recited to indicate to a person of ordinary skill in the art how stability in the semiconductor packaging material samples is to be assessed."

In response, Applicants have added the following feature to claim 20 to recite designating the semiconductor packaging material as being unstable or stable: "designating the semiconductor packaging material as being unstable if said determining has determined that there exists at least one significant difference between the at least one measured characteristic of the T test samples and the at least one characteristic of the C control samples, otherwise designating the semiconductor packaging material as being stable".

In addition, Applicants cite the specification, page 19, line 12 - page 21, line 10 for a discussion of two measuring techniques (ion chromotography and thermogravimetric analysis) for implementing step 64 of FIG. 3, namely the step of analyzing test and control sample characteristics which are relevant to assessing the stability of the semiconductor packaging material.

Based on the preceding arguments, Applicants respectfully contend that claims 1-39 are not unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

CONCLUSION

Based on the preceding arguments, Applicants respectfully believe that all pending claims and the entire application meet the acceptance criteria for allowance and therefore request favorable action. If the Examiner believes that anything further would be helpful to place the application in better condition for allowance, Applicants invites the Examiner to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below. The Director is hereby authorized to charge and/or credit Deposit Account 09-0457.

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